



Letter to the Stakeholders

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA Department of Health

Office of the Director

To Our Stakeholders:

Let me begin by expressing my pride in being part of an organization that has successfully launched a broad-based system of community health care designed to positively impact the health status of DC's uninsured residents. Across the nation, public health departments are experiencing difficulty in providing quality primary and preventive health care to their constituents who lack medical benefits. As public health professionals, we understand the value of population-based public health programs. We also know that early detection is a key to decreasing death rates and increasing the rate of recovery from disease. Without insurance, access to regular and preventive health care becomes an unaffordable luxury. But now we have a unique opportunity to bridge the gap between those who can afford healthcare and those who cannot.

The DC Health Care Alliance was created to fill the access gap for the District's uninsured residents who meet enrollment criteria. Although the Alliance is not currently funded at a level to address the health care needs of all uninsured residents, it represents a major step towards universal health coverage in DC. Since its inception, more than 37,000 individuals have received care. Many of the enrollees are now receiving regular preventive health care, dental care, access to prescription drugs, and early hospitalization. The Alliance members also have access to a comprehensive array of primary care services, case management, and health education programs. Disease management programs have been developed to better serve high-risk individuals suffering from DC's most prevalent diseases.

Within the DC Department of Health, it is the responsibility of the newly created Health Care Safety Net Administration to monitor outcomes and provide oversight of the Alliance. It is with much excitement, that I present the first annual report of operations of the Health Care Safety Net Administration.

In the past year, we have collaborated with you to address issues of access, quality, utilization, and funding. As partners on the front line of this new endeavor, we have witnessed the benefits to individuals and families in need. As we move into our second year of this innovative endeavor, we anticipate a welcome shift in service delivery and utilization patterns as more Alliance members seek preventive and primary health care services. Progress will be monitored, and we anticipate results demonstrating an effective reduction in emergency room usage, fewer hospital admissions, and healthier patients.

I thank you for your continued dedication and look forward to jointly improving DC's health delivery system. Together, we can realize our mutual goal of zero health care disparities for all District residents.

Sincerely,

James A. Buford
Director

Letter From HCSNA Director

The First Year of the Health Care Safety Net Administration

To Our Customers:

As we complete the first year of providing primary and preventative community health services to the uninsured residents of the District of Columbia, we do so with a sense of accomplishment in reaching our year one baseline startup goals. In year one we identified six strategic goals that we felt were critical for the successful implementation of the new health care delivery system. We have taken great steps towards the implementation of these goals.

During the first year, the Health Care Safety Net Administration worked with the Alliance to develop critical processes that will provide us with the desired outcomes as identified in the strategic plan. One of the processes developed is the institution of a management information system that will provide us with the baseline data needed to show process and program improvements in year two. We have also monitored and provided direction in the development of processes that will inform us on the quality of care provided to our patients. Steps have been taken towards the creation and implementation of a centralized scheduling system and electronic medical records to ensure coordination of care across the delivery system. We have monitored and provided direction in the creation of processes that coordinate the care of patients with serious illness. But most of all, we have laid the foundation for a comprehensive health care delivery system that focuses on primary and preventative care as opposed to more expensive secondary and tertiary health care. The new initiative has transformed a predominantly hospital-based care delivery system into a community-based program that provides all patients with a medical home and seeks to promote disease prevention and wellness.

Medical research has shown the benefits of primary and preventative care that focuses on early diagnosis and treatment, decreasing risk behaviors, increasing exercise, and increasing the consumption of fruits and vegetables. The Alliance focuses on all these critical health indices. The Alliance is concerned about keeping people healthy and not just treating disease as did the old system of care.

The Health Care Safety Net Administration is proud to report on the successful implementation of the Alliance baseline year one. The expedited timeframe for implementation and other barriers notwithstanding, the program has been able to provide care to the uninsured residents of the District of Columbia throughout the transition phase.

Because the Alliance is still in its infancy, we have great opportunities to complete the creation of a seamless system of care for the most vulnerable within our society. As Director of the Health Care Safety Net Administration, I look forward to working with the community and its leaders both within and outside the District government to ensure the successful implementation of this new system of care. Through collaboration with the private sector, we are confident that we can create a public health care delivery system that provides community-based, integrated, and culturally appropriate quality health care services that will ultimately improve the health status of the District's uninsured residents.

Sincerely,

Brenda L. Emanuel
Deputy Director

Acknowledgements

In this, the Inaugural Edition of the Health Care Safety Net Administration Annual Report, we express our sincere gratitude to the following:

The many citizens and healthcare advocates
who displayed determination, courage, patience and
an unyielding commitment to ensuring that quality
health services are available
for the economically less fortunate
men, women and children
of our nation's capital

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The District of Columbia City Council, Committee on Human Services

For their guidance and unwavering support of the monitoring and oversight responsibilities of the HCSNA

The District of Columbia's Health Services Reform Commission

For their advocacy, dedication, time, guidance, and support of our monitoring and oversight mission

The District of Columbia Department of Health, Director

Mr. James A. Buford

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The District of Columbia Office of General Counsel

The District of Columbia Office of the Chief Financial Officer

The District of Columbia's Departments of Corrections/Fire and EMS

For committing dedicated professionals and time toward this effort

Our Committed Partners in The DC Healthcare Alliance

Greater Southeast Community Hospital

Chartered Health Plan

Unity Healthcare, Inc

Children's National Medical Center

George Washington University Hospital

All other Alliance Network Providers and their Staffs